



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.7708 | FAX (517) 373.1450

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/gilbert/

For Immediate Release
August 23, 2005

Contact: Scott Starr
517-373-7708

Sen. Gilbert welcomes governor's new interest in agriculture

LANSING – Sen. Jud Gilbert says he welcomes the governor's newfound interest in the agricultural sector and looks forward to working with her on agriculture related legislation.

"I am pleased to see the governor finally acknowledging the agriculture industry and pledging her commitment to it," said Gilbert, vice-chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Tourism. "Now that she claims she is serious about helping the industry, we look forward to having her sign bills that will help our farmers and rural communities. Previously, we were concerned about getting our bills signed, but now anticipate them being received warmly by the administration."

Gilbert is responding to the governor's radio address from Friday where she said it is important to support and help our farmers and agricultural processors. Granholm's radio address marks a change in her administrations stance toward agricultural and rural issues. In the past, her approach has been one of inaction and vetoes.

Gilbert cites the methane digester bills as one example. The governor previously vetoed legislation to help livestock producers purchase methane digesters to reduce manure handling costs and protect Michigan's waterways. New bills have been passed by the Senate and are awaiting action in the House. Once passed, he expects the governor to sign them.

Another example of an action he said the governor can take is to drop her opposition to the Agriculture Experiment Station and the Michigan State University Extension program.

"These are critical elements in Michigan's agricultural economy," Gilbert said. "In the past, Governor Granholm has tried to dramatically slash funding for these key programs. Now that she has seen the key role agriculture plays in our state's economy, I am hopeful she will fully support these crucial programs."

Gilbert also notes it took an act of the legislature to assist Michigan Sugar in the purchase of Monitor Sugar. The governor's administration had discretion to help nearly 600 farm families but choose to ignore the situation at the time.

"While her commitment to agriculture in the past has been questionable, we are encouraged to see her wanting to participate in our efforts to help an important economic sector," said Gilbert, R-Algonac. "We will continue to send her legislation that will spur growth in agriculture and will be awaiting her signature."

###